

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully submitted.

Claims 3-4, 14-27, 30-35 and 38- 42 are pending in this application. Claims 3-4, 14, 16-26, 30-33 and 38-41 are amended; and Claims 3, 28-29, and 36-37 are canceled by the present amendment. Claims 3-4, 30-33 and 38-41 are amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims from which they depend; and Claims 14 and 16-26 are amended to correct cosmetic matters of form. No new matters is presented.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by Green (U.S. Patent 6,694,026); Claims 28, 29, 36 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Noeske (U.S. Patent No. 6,351,631) in view of deBuda (U.S. Patent No. 4,384,357); Claims 3, 4, 30-33 and 38-41 were objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims; and Claims 14-27, 34, 35, and 42 were indicated as allowed.

Applicant appreciatively acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter. In response, dependent Claims 3, 4, 30-33 and 38-41 are amended to be rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Specifically, dependent Claims 3 and 4 are amended to incorporate the subject matter of independent Claim 2; Claim 30 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claims 28 and 29; Claim 31 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of independent Claim 28; Claim 32 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claims 31 and 28; Claim 33 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claim 28; Claim 38 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claims 36 and 37; Claim 39 is amended to incorporate the subject

matter of Claim 36; Claim 40 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claims 39 and 36; and Claim 41 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claim 36.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that amended independent Claims 3, 4, 30-33 and 38-41 are allowable over the applied references, and that the objection thereto be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e), and Claims 28, 29, 36 and 37 under 35 U.S.C. 103, these claims are canceled thereby rendering these rejections moot.

Allowed Claims 14 and 16-26 are amended only to correct matters of form, thus, Applicant submits that these claims, as amended, maintain patentability over the applied references. Specifically, these claims are amended to replace the terminology “characterized by” or “characterized in that,” with “wherein” or “further comprising,” to conform to U.S. claim drafting practice.

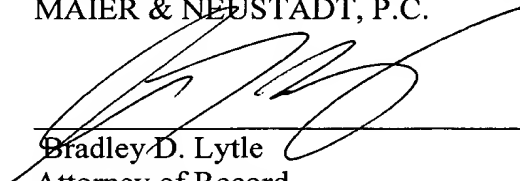
Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claim 3-4, 14-27, 30-35 and 38- 42 is patentably distinguishing over the applied references. The present application is therefore believed to be in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of the application is therefore requested.

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If the Examiner believes any additional formal matter need be addressed in order to place this application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone at the Examiner's convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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